

The TEDS Report

December 16, 2010

Primary and Secondary/Tertiary Marijuana Use among Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions

In Brief

- In 2008, primary marijuana admissions were less likely than secondary/tertiary (hereafter “secondary”) marijuana admissions to be non-Hispanic White (48.8 vs. 63.4 percent) and more likely to be non-Hispanic Black (29.8 vs. 19.3 percent) or Hispanic (15.4 vs. 11.2 percent)
- Primary marijuana admissions were younger than secondary marijuana admissions: 62.0 percent of primary marijuana admissions were aged 12 to 24, while 70.2 percent of secondary marijuana admissions were 25 or older
- The vast majority of both groups initiated marijuana use before the age of 18 (87.6 percent for primary marijuana admissions and 82.4 percent for secondary marijuana admissions)

According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug among the general U.S. population (15.2 million past month users).¹ Moreover, the proportion of all substance abuse treatment admissions reporting the abuse of marijuana increased from 26.8 percent in 1992 to 37.3 percent in 2008.² The widespread use of marijuana among the general population and the increase in the proportion of admissions reporting marijuana abuse is a public health concern that impacts the general community and the substance abuse treatment system.

The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) collects data on the primary substance of abuse and up to two additional substances of abuse at the time of admission to substance abuse

treatment. Using data from TEDS for 2008, this report compares characteristics of substance abuse treatment admissions aged 12 or older who reported marijuana as their primary substance of abuse with those of admissions that reported marijuana as their secondary or tertiary substance of abuse (hereafter referred to as “secondary marijuana admissions”). Nearly 322,000 substance abuse treatment admissions (17.0 percent of all admissions) reported marijuana as their primary substance of abuse, and approximately 384,000 admissions (20.3 percent of all admissions) reported marijuana as a secondary substance of abuse.

Demographics

The proportion of males and females were similar among both primary marijuana and secondary marijuana admissions. In each group, males represented almost three quarters of the admissions (73.7 percent for primary marijuana admissions and 69.2 percent for secondary marijuana admissions).

Primary marijuana admissions were less likely than secondary marijuana admissions to be non-Hispanic White (48.8 vs. 63.4 percent) and more likely to be non-Hispanic Black (29.8 vs. 19.3 percent) or Hispanic (15.4 vs. 11.2 percent) (Figure 1).

Primary marijuana admissions were younger than secondary marijuana admissions: 62.0 percent of primary marijuana admissions were aged 12 to 24, while 70.2 percent of secondary marijuana admissions were 25 or older (Figure 2). The average age of primary marijuana admissions was approximately 24, while the average age of secondary marijuana admissions was approximately 32.

Age of First Use and Frequency of Use

Even though primary marijuana admissions were, on average, 8 years younger than secondary marijuana admissions, the vast

Figure 1. Primary and Secondary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older, by Race/Ethnicity: 2008

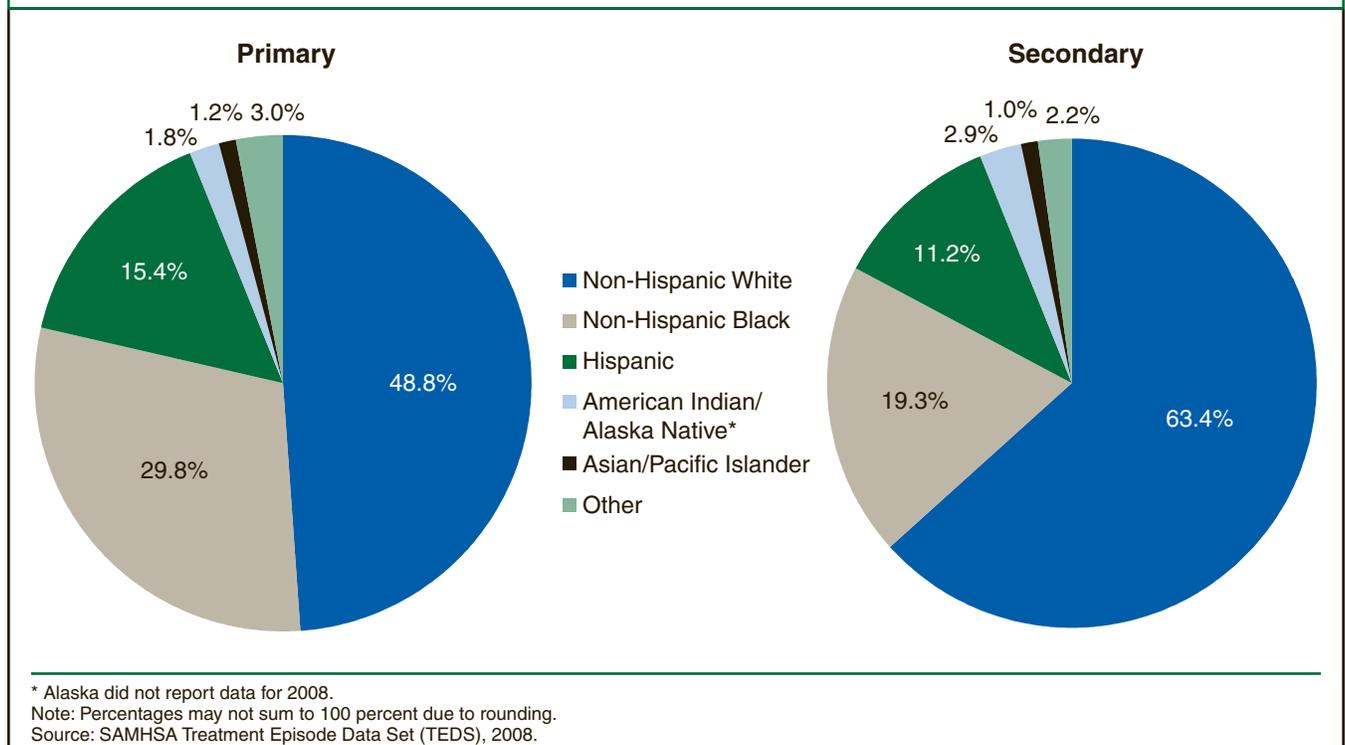
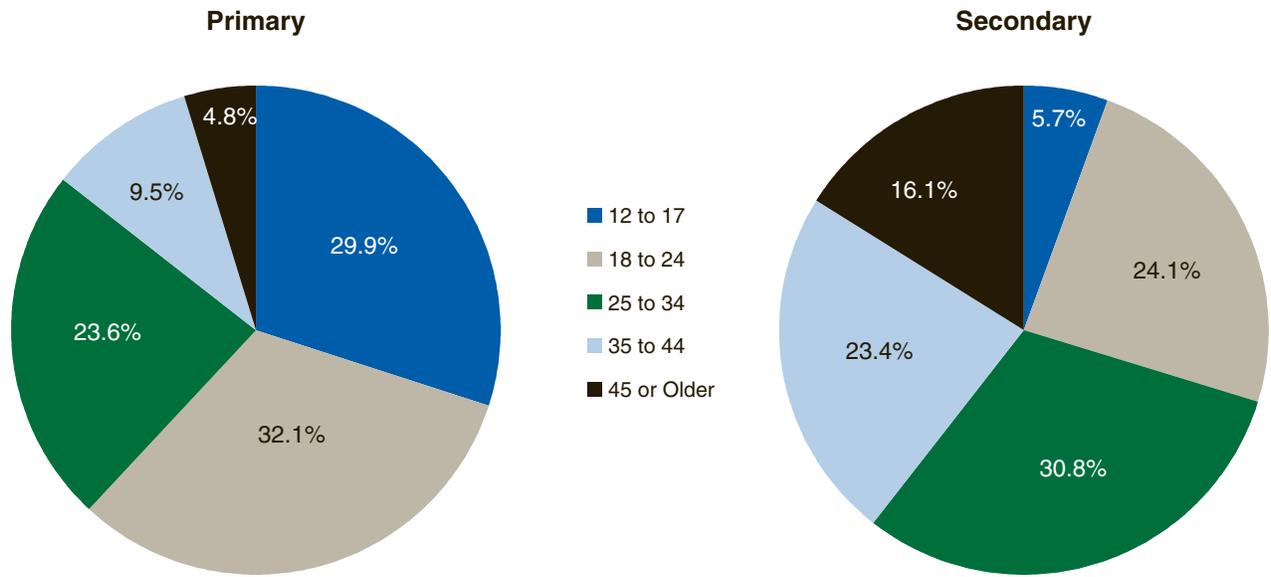


Figure 2. Primary and Secondary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older, by Age Group: 2008



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.
 Source: SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 2008.

majority of both groups initiated marijuana use before the age of 18 (87.6 percent for primary marijuana admissions and 82.4 percent for secondary marijuana admissions) (Figure 3). Primary marijuana admissions were slightly more likely than secondary marijuana admissions to report daily marijuana use (24.1 vs. 20.9 percent) and less likely to report not using the substance in the past month (37.0 vs. 43.9 percent).

Additional Substances of Abuse

Primary and secondary marijuana admissions reported abusing similar substances in combination with marijuana, but the rates at which the two

groups reported these substances differed. Although marijuana was the only reported substance of abuse for 39.5 percent of primary marijuana admissions, among those reporting more than one substance of abuse, alcohol was the most commonly reported secondary substance (45.4 percent), followed by cocaine/crack (12.7 percent) and methamphetamine (5.9 percent) (Figure 4). Among secondary marijuana admissions, alcohol was the most commonly reported primary substance of abuse (51.6 percent), followed by cocaine/crack (17.7 percent), methamphetamine (10.7 percent), heroin (10.3 percent), and other opiates/synthetics (6.5 percent) (Figure 5).

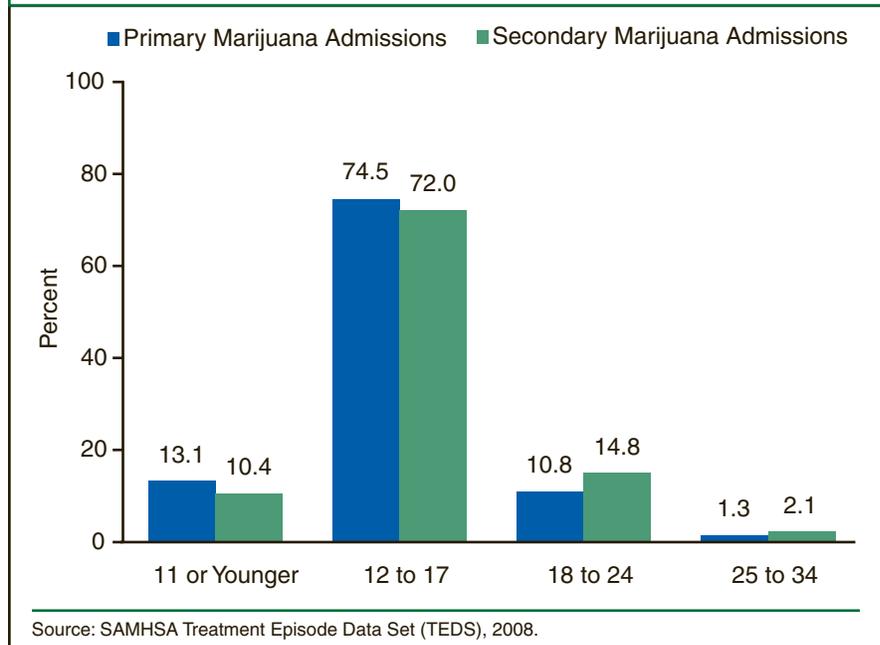
Principal Source of Referral

The criminal justice system was the most common source of referral to substance abuse treatment for both types of admissions, though primary marijuana admissions were more likely than secondary marijuana admissions to have been referred by this source (57.0 vs. 41.6 percent) (Figure 6). Primary marijuana admissions were about half as likely as secondary marijuana admissions to have been self-referred (15.0 vs. 28.2 percent).

Discussion

As the TEDS data show, admissions entering treatment for marijuana abuse are not a homogeneous group. Although there are some similarities, admissions that abused marijuana only or that abused other drugs secondarily to marijuana form a distinct group from admissions that had a different primary drug and abused marijuana secondarily. This distinction is particularly important for two reasons. First, intake and assessment workers need to be careful in posing queries to elicit a drug use history in order to ensure as much accuracy as possible. Second, in facilities with multiple modalities and/or where the American Society for Addiction Medicine (ASAM)

Figure 3. Primary and Secondary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older, by Age of First Use: 2008



Patient Placement Criteria are used, the information may be central to ensuring that the

client receives the appropriate level of care at the beginning of his/her treatment.³

Figure 4. Selected Secondary Substances Reported by Primary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older: 2008

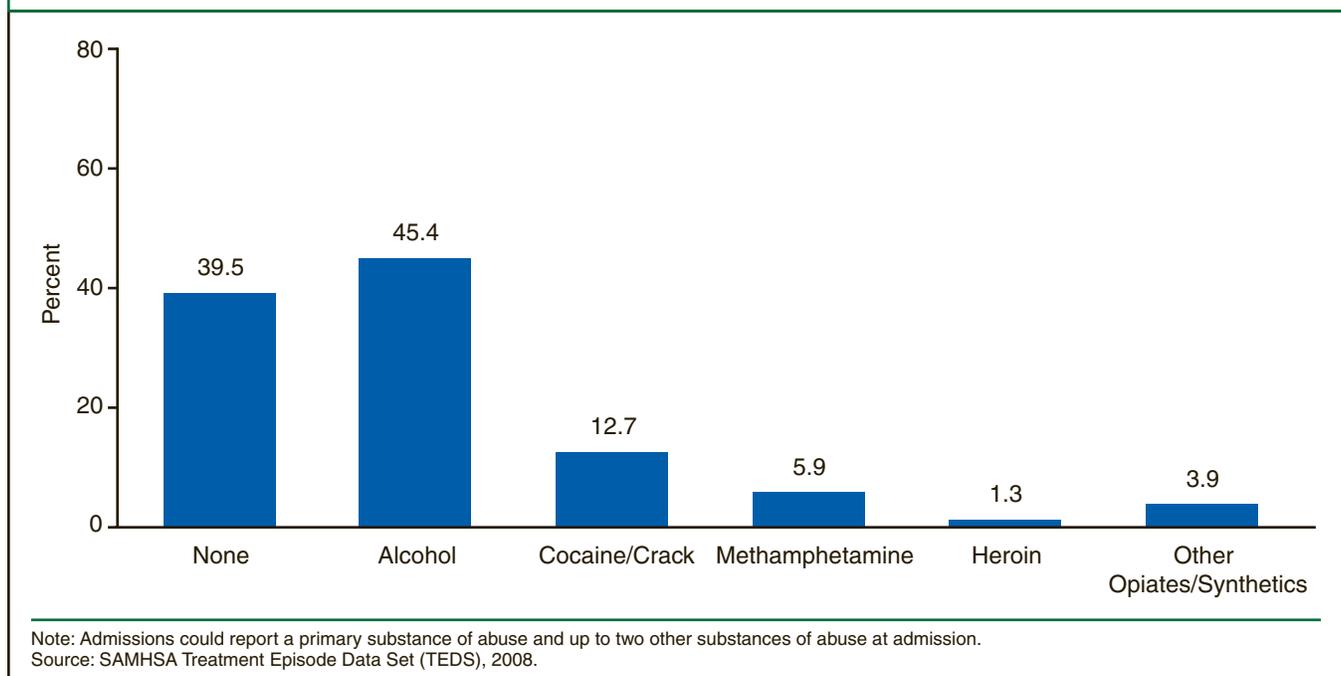
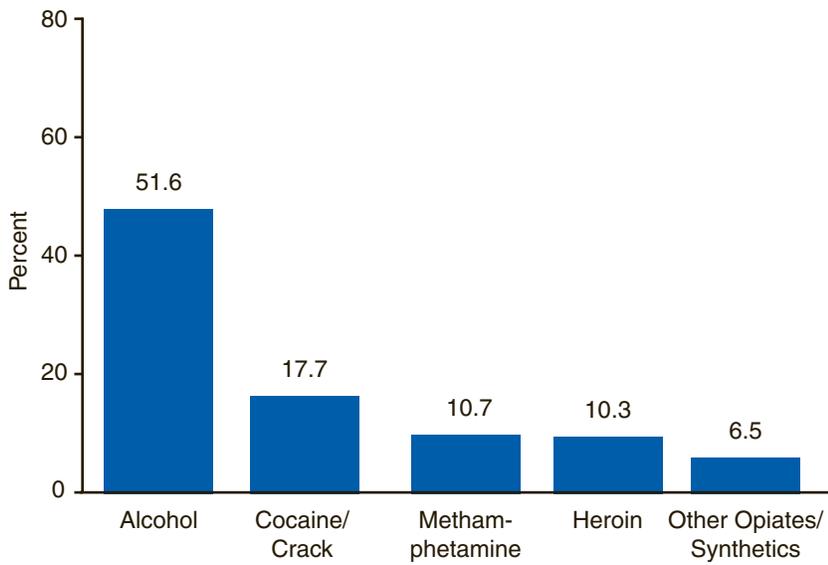


Figure 5. Selected Primary Substances Reported by Secondary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older: 2008



Source: SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 2008.

End Notes

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (2009). *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National findings* (NSDUH Series H-36, HHS Publication No. SMA 09-4434). Rockville, MD: Author.

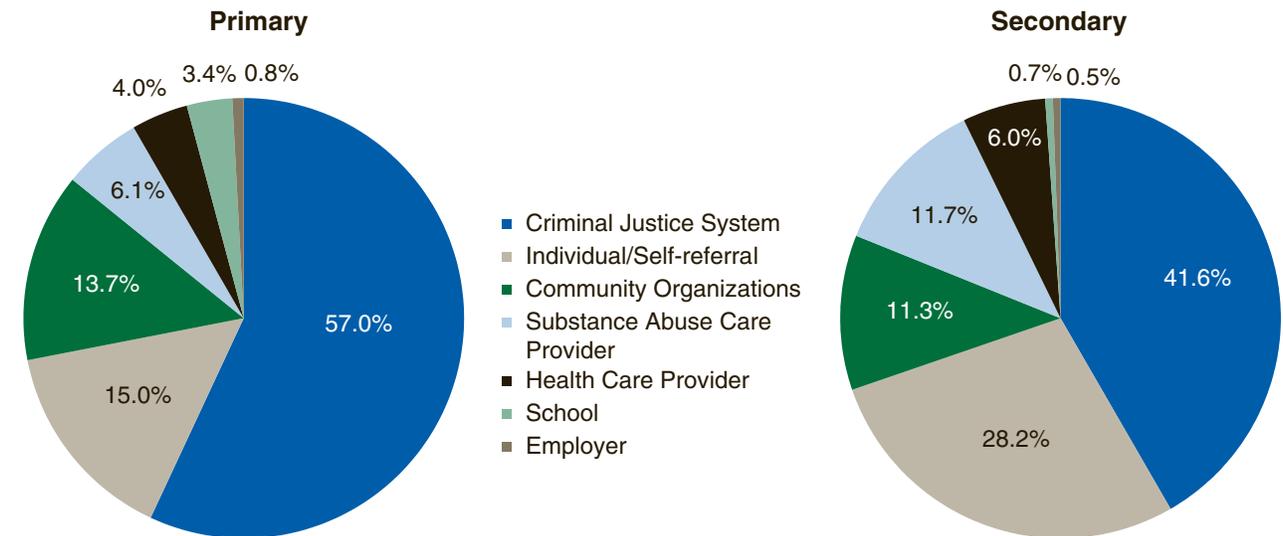
² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (2009). *Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)* [Data file based on data received through August 31, 2009].

³ Mee-Lee, D. (Ed.). (2007, May). *Patient placement criteria for the treatment of substance-related disorders* (ASAM PPC-2R). Chevy Chase, MD: American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Suggested Citation

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (December 16, 2010). *The TEDS Report: Primary and Secondary/Tertiary Marijuana Use among Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions*. Rockville, MD.

Figure 6. Primary and Secondary Marijuana Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Aged 12 or Older, by Principal Source of Referral: 2008



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: SAMHSA Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), 2008.

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Findings from SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) for 2008

Primary and Secondary/Tertiary Marijuana Use among Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions

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The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) is a compilation of data on the demographic characteristics and substance abuse problems of those aged 12 or older admitted for substance abuse treatment. TEDS is one component of the Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS), an integrated data system maintained by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). TEDS information comes primarily from facilities that receive some public funding. Information on treatment admissions is routinely collected by State administrative systems and then submitted to SAMHSA in a standard format. TEDS records represent admissions rather than individuals, as a person may be admitted to treatment more than once. State admission data are reported to TEDS by the Single State Agencies (SSAs) for substance abuse treatment. There are significant differences among State data collection systems. Sources of State variation include completeness of reporting, facilities reporting TEDS data, clients included, and treatment resources available. See the annual TEDS reports for details. TEDS received approximately 1.9 million treatment admission records from 48 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico for 2008.

Definitions for demographic, substance use, and other measures mentioned in this report are available in the following publication: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (December 11, 2008). *The TEDS Report: TEDS Report definitions*. Rockville, MD.

The TEDS Report is prepared by the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, SAMHSA; Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc., Arlington, VA; and RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC. **Information and data for this issue are based on data reported to TEDS through August 31, 2009.**

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Access the latest TEDS public use files at:
<http://oas.samhsa.gov/SAMHDA.htm>

Other substance abuse reports are available at:
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